



वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम्
vasudhaiva
kutumbakam



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Message from Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai

Work, Worship, Wisdom

What a month, December was! Starting with the observance of Bhagavad Gita Jayanti – the song of Lord Krishna in the first week, to the celebrations of Christmas – the advent of Lord Christ at Joy Village in Nigeria during the last week, it was a month of work, worship and wisdom.

Work

Setting up of the first outreach diagnostic and dispensary facility in Vizag, Andhra Pradesh – Sai Swasthya, which is intended to be a wellness centre catering to rural populations for early diagnostics and interventions, in association with Sanjeevani and Sarla Memorial Hospitals, was the new service initiative that happened this month. This programme, which will eventually be a nationwide initiative with over 250 centres that shall be formally launched in January 2023, has already taken first steps in Vizag.

The next steps towards medical education in equipping the Sri Sathya Sai Rajeswari Memorial Academic Block were taken to ensure timely launch of the medical school in the coming months – a global first in the field of free medical training.

Furthering the teachings of the great Sri Adi Shankaracharya who established centres of *advaita* philosophy, the association with the 1200-year-old Sringeri Sharada Peetham saw the next steps in supporting the translation of Adi Shanakara's writings into English – a joint initiative of Advaita Shodha Kendra at Sringeri and the Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence.

Worship

The time of the year when the whole world celebrated the advent of the Christ – the compassionate one, was spent in festivities at Joy Village in the small hamlet of Ebe of the Enugu region in Nigeria. The ascension of Father Charles Ogada left a void that could only be filled by not mournful remembrances, but grateful celebrations of his life and works. So, a delegation of devotees from USA, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and India landed in the joyful village with gifts and goodie bags, on the eve of Christmas, to join the thousand plus children and seventy plus staff of Joy Village, on the glorious eve of Christmas as 'One World One Family.' The gospel songs interspersed with speeches and African cultural dances by the students and staff culminating in the specially composed song on Father Charles – 'Father stand with me', brought tears to many eyes in the audience. Father Charles, so also the Heavenly Father, has heard their prayers, and stands with them, by them and for them for all times to come.

Wisdom

The nectarine teachings of *bhagavad gītā* were studied by students, staff and devotees, for the entire year spanning the time between the last Gita Jayanti and this one on 3rd December. Undisputedly, the most significant and comprehensive scripture of *sanātana dharma*, the *bhagavad gītā*'s study was enhanced by summary discourses on every chapter, which are now available on Sai Vrinda for all.

As we bid farewell to 2022 and welcome 2023, may the wisdom of Adi Shankara that teaches us to see all as one Supreme Divine, the worship of Christ by loving and serving all, and the principles of non-doership of work of *bhagavad gītā* guide our thoughts, words and deeds.



At the Forefront

Celebrating Christmas in Africa – The Mother Continent of The World

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai visited two countries in Africa – **Nigeria and Rwanda** this Christmas Season.

23 December 2022

The JOY Village, Enugu – Nigeria

A Recap about JOY Village

‘Jesus First’, ‘Others Next’, and ‘Yourself Last’ – This is JOY Village; this is indeed the way to joy!

The joy began when **Father Charles Ogada** founded the **Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative (SSAI)**, a non-profit humanitarian organisation in the year 2010. This inspiration came from Sri Sathya Sai Baba, whom he first met in the year 2006.

SSAI has been rendering humanitarian services ever since, in the following ways:

- **‘Liquid Love’** began in 2010 to provide drinking water to quench the thirst of thousands of people in the villages of Enugu

Visit to Aruike Speciality Hospital, Enugu



- **‘Heart of Love Children’s Home’** was established in 2011 to provide shelter to children who have been orphaned, left homeless, or disadvantaged due to poverty
- **The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA)** with primary and secondary sections provide free values-based education to about 1,200 students from nursery to high school level. These students come from impoverished backgrounds from more than 48 surrounding villages

Visit to Aruike Speciality Hospital, Enugu



Visit to The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA)



Christmas Carols and Choir Songs

- The **Anuli Chapel** was built in the year 2015
- The **Aruike Speciality Hospital** in a 35,000 sq.ft.area was inaugurated in 2016 to provide free primary and secondary healthcare services
- Another **Aruike Speciality Hospital** was inaugurated in **Imo** in the year 2020 during the COVID pandemic

Father Charles Ogada merged with his Divine Father in March 2022.

However, Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai who had assured Father Charles in 2017 that He would help Africa with *annam* (Food), *aksharam* (Education), *aarogyam* (Health) and *anandam* (Bliss), did not miss to be with the children of JOY village and fill them with *ananda*.

A Summary about the Visit

33 guests from Singapore, Australia, USA, UK and Muddenahalli, along with Emmanuel and Obina – the two students who studied at TELA and are currently pursuing their graduation at the Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, were part of this visit to Nigeria.

Traditional African Dance



At the Forefront

25 December 2022

Kigali, Rwanda – The Land of Thousand Hills

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai was invited to visit the country of Rwanda by HE Ms Jacqueline Mukangira, the High Commissioner of Rwanda to India. She had visited Sathya Sai Grama (the epicentre of Sadguru's service and spiritual activities) at Muddenahalli in the Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka during July 2022. She had also visited the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Centre for Child Heart Care in November 2022.

Impressed by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai's service activities, she prayed that a facility for paediatric cardiac care should commence in Rwanda to save thousands of children who are born with congenital heart defects every year.

Kigali Genocide Memorial

In 1994, during the Rwandan Civil War, genocide was orchestrated where over one million people were massacred. The scale and brutality of the genocide caused shock worldwide, but no country intervened to forcefully stop the killings. It has been 28 years and the people still suffer from horrific memories of the genocide killings.



Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai with Under-19 Women's Cricket Team of Rwanda along with Mr Eric Dusingizimana, Captain of the Rwandan Cricket team and his wife



U19 Women's Cricket Team of Rwanda

Mr Dusingizimana had batted for 51 hours continuously to set a Guinness Book of World Records to raise one million pounds to build a stadium in Rwanda.

Sadguru encouraged the U19 girls who will soon be appearing in the T20 World Cup 2023, representing Rwanda.

"The more you practise, you will draw more grace from God. Let your energy be spent in productive and constructive things. It's time for Rwanda to shine in the world, and this is your privilege!"

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai also invited the girls to perform at the cricket stadium, which will soon be completed in Muddenahalli.

A Centre for Paediatric Cardiac Excellence in Rwanda

Sadguru announced that He will establish a Centre for paediatric cardiac excellence in Rwanda not only for the children of the country, but also for children from surrounding countries.

Training and conducting paediatric cardiac missions will commence in the coming months.

At the Kigali Genocide Memorial



With Dr Sabin Nsanzimana, Minister of Health, Government of Republic of Rwanda along with Sadguru and His delegation from India



07 December 2022

– Prashanthi Balamandira Trust was conferred the SABERA Award 2022

Prashanthi Balamandira Trust won the Jury Commendation at the prestigious SABERA – Social and Business Enterprise Responsible Awards – in the Education category for rendering exemplary social service through imparting values-based education absolutely free of cost.



The Award was actively supported by industry stalwarts from large multinationals, changemakers and policy influencers alike. To name a few – Mr Shivam Puri – CEO, Cipla Health Ltd; Mr Kiran D M – CEO, ONGC Foundation; Ms Garima Singh – Chief Government Affairs and Communication Officer, PepsiCo India; Mr Chandru Badrinarayana – COO, Bluesky Analytics; Mr Deepak Baghla – CEO, Invest India; and Ms Meenakshi Gupta – Co-Founder, Goonj had been a part of the event.

Handpicked from hundreds of overall nominations, Prashanthi Balamandira Trust won the award this year after being screened through a two-tier process overseen by an eminent jury led by Madam Renu Sud, MD, HDFC Bank Ltd.

The recognition was conferred at the UNESCO House, New Delhi, on 07 December 2022.



Representing Prashanthi Balamandira Trust, the CEO of Global Outreach – Ms Bhumana Santhanam, received the SABERA Award



SAI SWASTHYA
Wellness Centre
DIAGNOSTIC + DISPENSARY

**Sai Swasthya – Wellness Centre
The Debut at Vishakapatnam,
Andhra Pradesh**

Wellness starts with the body. A healthy body is the house that preserves a healthy mind to perform well in the world and realise own's true potential. **Wellness is Welfare.**

As per World Health Organisation's Global Health Expenditure database, 'Out of Pocket' health expenditure of India in the year 2019 was **54.78**, which was the highest amongst all the other countries of the world. In today's scenario, making primary healthcare services affordable and accessible for the underserved population residing in rural hinterlands is of paramount importance.

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai has launched a novel wellness programme called '**Sai Swasthya**' to provide the necessary screening, consultation, diagnostics, counselling and therapeutics, absolutely free of cost to all.

The two main streams of Sai Swasthya's wellness scheme are:

- 1. Maternal and Child Health – Nutrition and Health Support**
- 2. Non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, anaemia, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, obesity...etc.**

The programme will be dedicated to the nation on **15 January 2023**.

Scenario as it is:

Maternal and Child Health

- In India, about 810 women die of pregnancy or child bearing every day.
- 99% of global Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) occurs in low and mid income countries. In 2017, India attributes 12% of this global share
- MMR has come down to 97 per 100,000 live births in 2020; however the target is to bring it down to 70 by 2030
- Maternal deaths among young women (15 to 24 years) is about 38% of the total maternal mortality in India

Anaemia

- 59% of Indian women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia. This leads to high morbidity and mortality, low birth-weight of new borns, preterm birth and high infant mortality
- Anaemia in children aged 6 months to 59 months is more than 40% in about 675 districts in India
- The cost of anaemia to the country is about 4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for children and adults combined and 1.3% of GDP for children
- Iron deficiency anaemia is one of the top five leading causes of years of life lost due to disability

In Focus

Sai Swasthya – Wellness Centre The Debut at Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Non-Communicable Diseases

- The study report in 2017 by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) 'India: Health of the Nation' – The State-Level Disease Burden Initiative', it is estimated that the proportion of deaths due to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India have increased from 37.9% in 1990 to 61.8% in 2016
- 60% of deaths occur due to Non-Communicable Diseases like cardiovascular diseases (CVD), Diabetes, Hypertension, Cancer etc.
- Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) contributes to 50% of deaths in young people who are 50 years and below. In Karnataka, 36% of adults between 40 to 60 years die of CAD
- Total 'Years of Life Lost' (YLL) from premature deaths equates to about 20 years of life
- More than half of 55 million CVD patients live in rural areas
- There are only 275 districts with Cath Lab in the country out of 718 districts
- 69.2 million (7.3%) of India's adult population has diabetes; 10.3% has pre-diabetes; 47.3% with diabetes are not diagnosed

Sai Swasthya's Model

- Both tele-consultation and in-centre services will be offered
- Sai Swasthya App could be used to register online and seek appointment
- The centre will be operating all seven days of the week
- Volunteering healthcare professionals will be offering their services
- Nodal hospitals will be functional for blood sample testing

Sai Swasthya at Vishakapatnam

The very first Sai Swasthya Centre was inaugurated on 18 December 2022 at Vishakapatnam in the presence of Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai. Dr Mallikarjun, the District Collector of Vishakapatnam along with several eminent personalities attended the event.

Children were screened for congenital heart conditions, ante natal screening was done and baby shower kits were given to expecting mothers.

The centre shall also conduct outreach programmes and distribute the multi-nutrient supplement Sai Sure to remote tribal hamlets in Paderu and Araku regions in Vishakapatnam.

Five Sai Swasthya Centres will be established in Andhra Pradesh in the coming days

250
Sai Swasthya Primary
Centres and more
than 600 sub-centres
will be established in
rural areas across the
country in the
near future

Service and Spiritual Activities



The 97th birthday of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was celebrated in the spirit of love and service across countries, where Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai has sown the eternal message of Baba – 'Love All Serve All' by walking the footsteps of Baba himself.

This section presents to you a glimpse of the service activities undertaken by the volunteers of the different Foundations and Trusts of Sai Global Federation of Foundations, with renewed enthusiasm and joy during the months of November and December 2022.

*“Service is the ultimate
expression of Love”*

Region 1

Australia



Heart of Love Foundation, Australia



New South Wales

- A small group of volunteers in Murwillumbah partnered with Agape Outreach in Tweed Heads and prepared **300 meals** at a commercial kitchen. These meals were delivered to homeless from the city of Tugun to Southport at Queensland
- Volunteers assisted in sorting clothes and personal supplies for the needy in Agape warehouse

Brisbane

Volunteers in Brisbane distributed new T-shirts and caps along with juice and Milo snack bars to **30 homeless persons**

Melbourne

Volunteers of Heart of Love Foundation in partnership with Wyndham Park Community Centre have adopted **170 families in need**. Groceries, festive food items and personal hygiene products were distributed to these families.

Perth

Volunteers in Perth cooked **140 meals** and distributed it to the homeless, refugees and an indigenous community, by also collaborating with other organisations.



International Summit on Values-Based Education, Gold Coast Convention Centre, Queensland

The Heart of Love Foundation Australia in association with the Australian Centre for Human Development hosted and conducted the International Summit on Values-Based Education at the Gold Coast Convention Centre, Queensland, Australia on the 05 and 06 November 2022. The theme of this conference was **'Embracing Education with the Heart.'**

Over **80 participants** attended the summit in person. Over **100 participants** joined virtually from around the world. The participants comprised of teachers from Australia and overseas, including staff from Toogoolawa School – Australia, and The Embodiment of Love Academy – Nigeria.

The speakers who delivered keynote addresses at the conference were from Australia, Canada, Croatia, India, Singapore, UK and USA. They were experts of their own kind in the field of values-based education and its research.



- **Dr Brendan Nelson AO**, Former Leader of Australian Liberal Party, Former Education Minister and Former Senior Diplomat to the European Union and NATO, Government of Australia
- **Ms Deborah O'Neill**, Senator, Government of New South Wales, Australia
- **Emeritus Professor Ron Toomey**, Victoria University, Australia
- **Madam Kunawathyammal**, Senior Teaching Fellow, National Institute of Education-Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- **Ms Bhuvana Santhanam**, Director, Global Outreach, Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence

Learning Outcomes of the Summit are as follows:

- Unconditional love is the foundation of values-based education
- See the child in the child, and not what they appear to be
- Self-transformation of teachers leads to transformation in children
- A comprehensive values vocabulary in school helps to nurture values
- Teaching methodology has to emphasise on internal involvement that will help us understand who we really are

Region 1

Fiji



Sai Prema Foundation



Sai Prema Foundation Fiji

Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre at Suva, Fiji conducted a free health check camp for about **250 underprivileged individuals** who came from the villages and settlements of Tailevu, Rewa, Suva and Lami.

- General health check, non-communicable disease screening, women health check, children health check for heart and oral health was provided, completely free of cost. Nutritious lunch and free bus transport was arranged



Laos



Sri Sathya Sai Foundation
Lao PDR

- A two-day blood donation camp was organised in partnership with Lao Red Cross, and **76 individuals** donated their blood
- On the 22 November 2022, Buddhist ceremonies known as ‘Tang Kong Boun Attha’ were conducted by Buddhist monks. A food festival and a cultural programme performed by the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, were also held
- On the 23 November 2022, students, teachers and parents offered alms and assistance to Buddhist monks and their monasteries. In the evening, about **800 individuals** participated in the *bhajans* that was organised at the Home of Sai

Region 2

India



03 December 2022
Gita Jayanti – The Birth of the
bhagavad gita

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, the *guru* who has taken upon himself, the role of His master, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to fulfill the goal of reestablishment of *sanātana dharma* in the world, has been working relentlessly, day and night, to water the seeds of universal oneness and humanity in humans, by restoring love in the hearts of all and encouraging service for fellow men. The ancient scriptures of India like the *bhagavad gita* and *upanishads* have been Sadguru’s grist, through which He has been inspiring young minds to rise above their petty concerns and focus on their true Highest Self.

The *bhagavad gita* is one such treatise of pure knowledge which could resolve many problems that afflict mankind today—be it material, emotional or spiritual.



gīta-ṣuḡīta

gīta – sugīta

The stream of *gīta*, the nectarine song of spiritual knowledge, began to flow from the spring of Sadguru’s love and wisdom, a year back when he termed it the *sugīta*; and it concluded this *gīta jayanti* on 03 December 2022—a truly revealing one year!

Like how honeybees convert nectar into honey, Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai processed the nectar of *gīta* into a sweeter form – the *sugīta*, pregnant with pragmatic analysis and philosophical enquiry, with relatable examples, light humour, wise adages, and concised points to remember.

Region 2

India



03 December 2022
Gita Jayanti – The Birth
of the *bhagavad gīta*

On the *gīta jayanti*, Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai reiterated the importance to practicing the values portrayed in the *gīta* as follows:

Fearlessness

ṣṛṣṭi, *sthithi*, *laya* are natural laws. *laya* is the destruction of the old and beginning of the new. *bhagavad gīta* sheds this understanding in everyone and removes the fear of death.

Start Early, Drive Slowly, Reach Safely

Like how a gadget comes with a manual which has to be read and understood before we start operating the manual, similarly *gīta* is the manual for our life, which has to be understood and its teachings imbibed while we are young.

Patient Listening

The whole of Chapter 1 of *bhagavad gīta*, Lord Krishna patiently listens to Arjuna to understand his concerns. Listening to understand, rather than listening to speak, is the value that Lord Krishna is teaching us.

Surrender

- The readiness that a *guru* expects in a *shishya* is his willingness to surrender to the *guru*. And that is when the *guru* can accept the *shishya* and guide him
- Surrendering to the Supreme Principle of Divinity, so that there is no trace of doership left in us. This understanding will transform us into pure instruments of the Divine

Equanimity

Once we completely surrender and know that we are only an instrument, praise or blame will not affect us.

Performing One's Duty for the Welfare of the World

Doing one's duty as worship to the Divine and offering its results to the Divine is the first step. Slowly one should progress to the stage of no doership and enjoyership, but rather being an instrument by attaining the state of oneness with the Divine.

Oneness

The ultimate purpose of learning *bhagavad gīta* is to see oneness, the same Divine principle in all.

Region 2

Nigeria



Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative

Joy Village Enugu, Nigeria



Healthcare

Aruke Specialty Hospital (ASH) runs two clinical facilities in the remote rural areas of Enugu and Imo. These Hospitals are meant for rural dwellers who cannot access quality healthcare services. Both the Hospitals offer a wide range of paediatric and maternal healthcare services, absolutely free of cost, while also treating children and adults from all age groups.

- In the month of November 2022, about **431 children and 534 adults** were treated
- **180 patients** were offered ophthalmic treatment
- **22 deliveries** were performed which included five caesarean sections
- **166 expecting women** were given the necessary antenatal care
- **20 surgeries** were performed, which included surgeries like circumcision, catheterization, lipoma, ear syringing, herniorrhaphy, hydrocelectomy, etc. **962 medical investigations** were conducted

Nutrition

- Over **500 nutritious meals** were served for the children of The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA) and also for children at two Government schools
- Cassava tubers were harvested in Nneani farms and were sold in the local market



Region 3

Turkey



Karşılıksız Hizmet Vakfı (Selfless Seva Trust)



- A total of **1,734 meals** consisting of grains, pasta with legume, milk, yoghurt and bread were distributed door to door at Şişli, Pendik and Ömerli and other districts of Istanbul, in the month of November 2022
- Utility bills for electricity, water, and gas were settled for **11 households**, and house rent was paid for **two households**



Region 4

Argentina



Fundación Sai Prema de Salud, Educación y Valores Humanos (Sai Prema Foundation for Health, Education and Human Values)



- **810 lunch meals** and **1,397 breakfasts** were distributed to soup kitchens such as – Comedor Urbino (Escobar City, Buenos Aires Province) , Los pequeños de Juan y Evita, Refugio Uguet Monarca, La Bonorino (Buenos Aires Province) and Asociación Cazadores de Escobar (Escobar City, Buenos Aires Province)
- At the city of La Plata, **868 lunch meals** and **2,311 breakfasts** were delivered to soup kitchens such as – Somos Su Esperanza, Los Gurises, Alma Corazon Crecer, and Los Angelitos
- First aid kits, clothes and shoes for children and adults, kitchen furniture and kitchen equipment were delivered at soup kitchens in the city of La Plata
- ‘Dental days’ were observed on 17, 18, and 19 November 2022 at Escobar to provide dental treatment. **75 children and 3 adults** were benefitted by this. Three young healthcare professionals travelled a distance of 800 km from Córdoba to Escobar to carry out this service, along with nurses from Buenos Aires
- Latin American Institute for Education in Human Values conducted the monthly virtual meeting called ‘**Café de Valores**’ or ‘**Values Café**’, which was attended by participants from several Latin American Countries
- At the Amor y Paz (Love and Peace) ashram, activities such as yoga classes, laughter yoga, Om Singing, workshop called ‘Life is a game, play it’ which conducts a couple of games to connect with the inner child...etc., took place as part of the regular spiritual activities
- Hogar Sierra Dorada, in San Marcos Sierra in the province of Córdoba has collaborated with Sai Prema Foundation to conduct yoga classes, English, drawing and sewing classes

Region 4

Brazil



Sai Amor Foundation (Sai Love Foundation)



- **185 hot vegan meals** were prepared at Casa Sai Amor and were distributed along with sweets and water to the needy in and around Rio de Janeiro
- Institute for Education in Human Values supports a pre-school by providing for everyday breakfast, lunch and evening soup for **45 students**. A total of **2,510 meals** were provided for the pre-schoolers in the month of November 2022



Mexico



Fundacion para el Desarrollo de la Excelencia Humana (Foundation For The Development of Human Excellence)



Casa Misericordia is a home for children who have suffered domestic violence, most of whom are Tarahumara Indians coming from low income families.

- **80 meals** were distributed to the children of this home in the below ways:
 - Volunteers visited this home on 20 November 2022 to distribute fruit beverages and chocolate cakes to children
 - On the 6 December 2022, volunteers distributed Tamales, which is a traditional Mexican dish. Along with it, beans, fruit beverages and piñata filled with candy and fruit were distributed
- Tennis shoes, socks and knit caps were also distributed to children
- Ron Farmer and Suwanti Farmer from Australia conducted the Session 5 of the six-sessions zoom training in 'Education in Human Values' for teachers, on 06 December 2022. Teachers and value educators from Mexico and different parts of Latin America participated in the session

Region 4

United States of America



Divine Will Foundation



Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre, Clarksdale, Mississippi

Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre at Clarksdale, Mississippi is on collaboration with Tallahatchie General Hospital at Charleston, Mississippi, since the last one year.



By this collaboration, Tallahatchie General Hospital provides radiology services completely free of cost to the patients who are referred to them by Sai Sanjeevani.

High-tech radiology services such as X-rays, CT scans, MRIs and Ultrasound tests were done for about **80 patients** who were referred by Sai Sanjeevani.

This highlights the need for free healthcare services, and this is where Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre plays a key role to provide free primary healthcare services.

Dr Chitra Mani, the Director of Clarksdale Medical Centre said, "Radiology services are so important. Most rural hospitals in the United States are struggling financially and many are on the verge of closing. Clarksdale's local hospital is suffering multi-million-dollar deficits, service cutbacks and critical staffing shortages."

My Inner Journey

27 to 72 – A Transformational Journey...

– Mrs Sylvie Sarda Craxi

Mrs Sylvie Sarda Craxi, wife of late Craxi Antonio was born in Paris, France in the year 1950. She is fortunate to have lived in Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Brindavan ashram at Whitefield, Bangalore and also at the Prasanthi Nilayam ashram in Puttaparthi. Her four children – three daughters and a son were blessed to have studied in Baba's institutions starting from the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar in Ooty and the Primary and Higher Secondary Schools in Puttaparthi.

Her three daughters – Bettina, Alessandra and Ananda were born in Milan, Italy; they studied in Baba's school and then continued their higher education in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur Campus. Her son, Victory was born at the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital in Whitefield under the care of Dr C Rajeswari, mother of Dr C Sreenivas, who currently heads the healthcare mission of Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai. Victory did his higher education at Shri Gulabkunverba Ayurved Mahavidyalaya Chikitsalaya at the Gujarat Ayurved University and completed his Bachelors in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS). Mrs Sylvie Craxi and her family have been ardent devotees of Baba for many years and have dedicated their all for Baba's service then and now...

At Puttaparthi, Swami used to tell us that we were in the process of transformation. I used to put together a few 'simple' spiritual weapons such as – “Be good, do good, see good, this is the way to God.” This is easy to say, but difficult to put into practice on a daily basis.

He used to remind us about the duty to be performed in the *kali yuga*, which is ‘seva without any expectation’, and that this would help us get rid of our pettiness and help us develop more love and compassion, towards our human family; while *nāmasmarana* would help us expand our mind from its narrow clutches and acquire good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds.



I remember contemplating on the impermanence of the body, on the fragility of our unreliable mind, and developing more curiosity towards my unknown true nature described by Swami as *paramātman*, the One we already are; while the appeal towards worldly things was slowly losing its grip. This rendered my thought process much lighter.

“All that is born is bound to die. Life is a bubble” – I was 27 years old when I came to Swami, an age when most of us have a wonderful feeling of eternity. Now, when I am 72 years old, my heart is filled with Swami's sublime teachings, deep enquiry and contemplation about my true Self.

Swami used to insist and repeat during darshan, time and again, with a sweet smile – “Be ready”, “Don't waste time”, “Wait, wait, wait.” I used to complete the sentences in a silent playful mood, smiling back at Him – “Don't waste time, Bangaru... run to Me”, “Be ready Bangaru...to meet Me”, “Wait, wait, wait...for Me, Bangaru”, and my reply would be – “Yes Swami...”

He used to call all of us “Bangaru” or ‘gold’, connoting the way in which his Divine hands, in time, would transform each one of us into precious jewels of His; warning us though, about the blows we would have to suffer in the process of transformation, while trusting with patience, love and faith, the Divine gold smith's plan.

‘Bangaru’ is pure and inalterable. Swami sees us as perfect, pure and eternal, made of the same Divine essence as His; He inspires us to become Him that is ‘One with Him’ or ‘Tat Twam Asi’ – this is what we really are. We should not become ‘like Him’, which implies two entities, but become Him, as He recently expressed during His discourse in Muddenahalli.

He invites us to go much deeper within. His motherly heart knows that we can make it; He knows more about ourselves than we do. Swami used to tell us in Parthi – A mother derives utmost happiness only from her own child and He would break into a smile by saying – “**You are mine, I am yours.**”

But, are we ready to accept the transformational process that Swami would put us through? Are we ready to submit ourselves to the metamorphosis of our inner personality? Whether we want it or not, this is where we are heading to! He used to tell us – “**The greatest gift one can offer the world is to disappear from it**”, which means that our petty personality has to dissolve totally and disappear.

This is where our loving Guru is taking us, in His perfect compassion. Swami's injunction was “*In order to keep your mind quiet, never give room to doubt.*” On how many occasions did we feel our mind sitting back in pure silence, while God's voice was echoing within? Hardly any...this means that our transformation is not yet over. This is the reason of His coming back, the final part of His mission on Earth is currently going on for the good of all.

Today, Swami gives us new opportunities to be of help to others, as the whole world is but one family – ‘*vasudhaiva kutumbakam.*’ He tells us over and over again that to know Him, we have to become Him.

How to build the Golden Age, this sacred Vedic Millenium that we are all waiting for? How many lives of prayers and sacrifices we must have done to be part of the construction of the Golden Age and for the establishment of *dharma*? All our prayers were only meant to take us to our destination, which is to become whom we truly are – embodiments of compassion and love.

We have to be patient with ourselves and slowly but steadily develop our innate divine nature; as the more we exercise this, the more we shall expand in love.

Being at Swami's feet, we are all at the threshold of our own heart, from here we have to progress in order to be able to open the inner door of the sacred chamber, where He is waiting for us. Should we fail upon having been blessed with the right opportunity at the right time, right place and right situation, the responsibility will remain entirely ours, even if He may say – “**If you fail, the failure will be mine.**”

Swami declared publicly at Puttaparthi – “*Nobody is listening, nobody is listening! If you don't transform yourselves, I will leave earlier than expected!*” and He did...We chose not to attend the funeral of the One who has no birth...no death. Swami was alive in our hearts and He was always there...why fear? Having known that He is installed in the depth of our hearts for ever, we found solace.



My Inner Journey

A few years later, my husband passed away. To whose grace could I attribute the quiet end of his journey, if not to our Swami? I still can hear His divine assurance – *“I shall wipe off your tears of despair and make you cry of joy”*... and He did.

When I first ‘met’ Swami in His subtle manifestation in Rome in the year 2018, in the form of Madhusudan Naidu, now Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, I remember the way Swami looked at me— His loving, profound and piercing eyes when stepping down from His car. He came forward, pacing happily, swiftly and quietly towards all of us. His eyes full of love, his sweet smile, a deep recognition and silent communion made my heart rejoice when it felt – *“I know it’s you! Oh Swami!”*

The ceaseless contemplation of His teachings, which I ruminated over and over these 45 years; observing His adamant determination in convincing us to transform ourselves, has inspired me to make sincere efforts. To overcome mental stiffness, premature conclusions, superficial judgements, and to develop goodwill in a detached manner, by being the witness of my own actions, rather than their author are some of the things that I try and put into practice.

I love inner silence, it’s like a calm garden ‘inside’ and I discovered that inner silence is a good remedy for all difficulties—be it at the individual level or at the collective societal level. When I close my eyes to observe inner silence, I see the darkness behind my closed eyelids, and it becomes so easy to take refuge in such an inner sight. I breathe slowly and I am in touch with myself. No thought crosses this inner screen, no mental projection protrudes in this calm presence of my inner being. I feel that inner peace is compatible with outer peace and vice versa—it is one and the same. By this way, it

becomes easier to develop detachment (*vairagya*) and discrimination (*viveka*). I find this to be a natural growth process; and may be this could blossom later into higher awareness?

Renouncing frustration, antipathy, and anger, is possible through will power. Regularly our inner being reminds us to take refuge within, in order to recover our balance. As Swami often repeats – **“Love is a decision.”** Will power is required to practice love in all situations. Such a decision will grant us an incredible inner strength to fight our weaknesses. I have observed that inner peace may arise in a few minutes. It is a natural and automatic process. The inner being never fasts, for like Swami says, *“Bliss is my food”*, bliss is the food of the inner being.

Once, Swami was addressing a group of devotees. He was talking about ‘Self effort’, when someone asked Him – *“Swami, I try to better myself but without success.”* Swami answered – *“Do not try, DO IT!”* When our Master believes in us, why can’t we believe in ourselves?

Determination arises from deep faith. Lack of love for our Higher Self, of whom our loving guru is the incarnation and reflection, our progress will slow down. And, no one else other than our own selves can be blamed for this. There is no technique, no philosophy, no method to apply, other than constant practice to reach our goal, by taking one step at a time and progressing, until inner peace settles. We have to go on, come what may. One day we’ll realize that our level of awareness rises, as per an automatic, natural inner effortless dynamic. Then, it will become much easier to exercise our will power and progress in that direction. Peace becomes so deep, we feel such a profound joy and happiness, that it becomes a habit to take refuge within.

It all started at Swami’s feet in Puttaparthi, when my heart and soul knew at first sight, He was ‘my’ Jesus with a new ‘dress’! His eyes told me everything – **“Yes, it’s me!”** Namasmarana sprouted and went on, echoing over the years – *“Aum, Sai Jesus.”* Then one day, the One who never was born and never will die, the embodiment of eternal life, left this physical dimension. Time passed on, and Swami, while teaching and guiding all of us again, declared at Muddenahalli – *“Time has come for you to transcend name and form – nāma and rūpa.”*

Swami had told us everything long ago – *“In the future I shall live on the hills.”* Here He is, gathering his people, rejecting none, waiting for all those who need and pray for His divine guidance. Once He explained at the assembly in Puttaparthi – *“Measuring the attachment you have towards Swami’s name and form will allow you to measure the attachment you have towards your own nāma and rūpa. Swami is the reflection of your Higher Self.”*

Swami is now guiding us to ascend and reach a higher state of Consciousness. Transformation is on because the **“The time has come”, He said.**

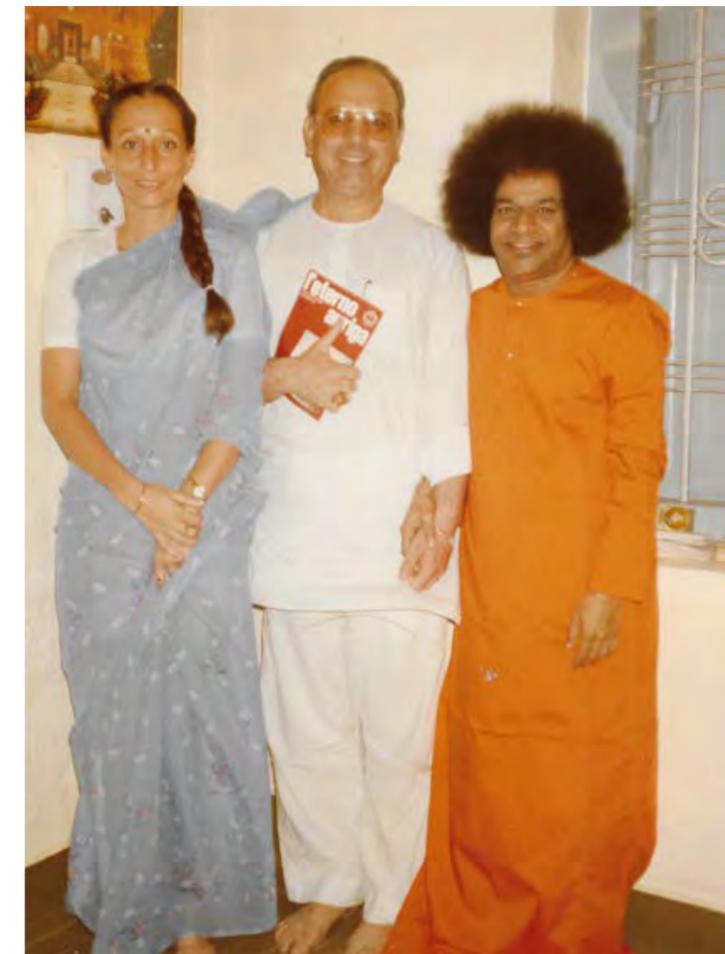
This reminds me of one of Swami’s visits to Italy, when He was taking a stroll along the rooms of His ashram/ residence in Assisi; when He said that He had told us many a time, years and years ago at Puttaparthi – *“In the future, I will come to Italy...”* and He did.

During this particular visit, in 2018, Swami was leading the group of devotees along the elegant staircase. All of a sudden His sweet voice resounded: *“Sylvie, can you climb?”* I heard myself answering – *“Yes Swami!”* He asked again – *“Your knees?”* I told Him – *“I am fine, Swami... thank you.”*

Without Him, where would we be today? Let us pass the test of transformation, and invite the formidable change of our inner state, so that we follow Him and climb high, without falling low.

Once, Swami had His house renovated in His ashram at Puttaparthi. The inauguration had taken place a few days before my husband, Antonio and I could reach there from Italy. Swami took Antonio inside His new residence, pressed the button of the lift which took them to the top floor, that opened the door to His inner apartments. This reminds me that with Swami besides us, we shall be able to reach higher planes.

His *saṅkalpa* will be done. No one can stop Him; His love will take care; He will repair each and every heart.



What is Culture?

Culture is simply concern for others. When you are concerned about others welfare, when you put others before yourself, you are cultured. Culture is not merely about knowing various kinds of traditional art forms or folk forms or any other things that your country has been blessed with. These are the external aspects of culture. But what should it all lead to? It should all lead to a sense of concern for your fellow men and fellow beings. Culture is equal to concern for others.

Everybody is concerned about themselves. But, cultured people will be concerned about others. Being well dressed and using all kinds of etiquettes does not make one cultured. When you develop genuine concern for each other, that is when you become cultured.



“Culture is equal to concern for others”

